



GNOC

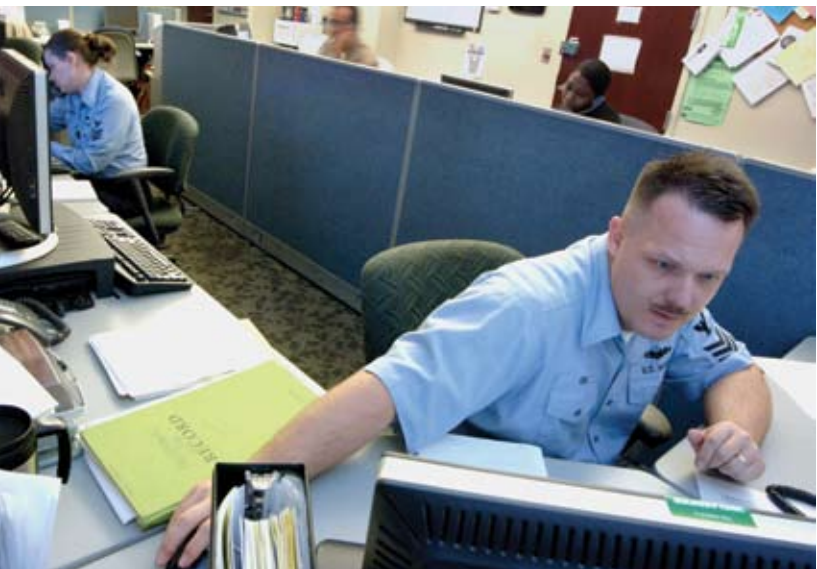
provides command and *control for NMCI*

Story and photos by MC2(SW) Christopher J. Koons

As the importance and scope of the Navy/Marine Corps Intranet grows larger every day, so does the need to provide sufficient control and oversight of the sprawling network. This is the role of the Global Network Operations Center, based at Naval Station Norfolk, VA.

“We provide the military command and control for the NMCI enterprise,” said CDR Allen Edmiston, GNOC’s assistant officer in charge. “Our job is like that of the combat information center on a ship. We ensure that NMCI is a warfighting system that is ready and capable of providing secure and uninterrupted service when needed.”

According to Edmiston, NMCI, which was started in 2000, now has more than 600,000 Navy warfighters (users) across the entire United States. The running of NMCI’s daily operations



(far left to right) IT1(SW) Karen Bundy and IT1(SW) Gary Orr stand watch in the GNOC watch floor.

is contracted to Electronic Data Systems. GNOC provides overall direction to the organization.

"We're the governance side of the operation," said Edmiston. "We look at the big picture of how to protect the entire network. In the event of an attack on the NMCI enterprise, GNOC is in a position to allocate resources to contain the event and ultimately restore the system."

According to IT1(SW) William Kerry, GNOC's operations leading petty officer, running NMCI is a team effort, with GNOC serving as head coach.

"GNOC's watch officer is the Navy's voice in NMCI," said Kerry. "Whenever there is a problem the watch officer gives orders to EDS, which consults its contractors to resolve the issue."

According to Kerry, GNOC has a staff of about 30 people, both military and civilian. They keep the watch floor manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"We work in 12-hour shifts, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.," he said. "There

must always be a watch officer on the floor."

On the watch floor, the team closely monitors all NMCI activity to detect any possible threats to the

network's health and safety.

"Those on watch maintain global and network situational awareness," said Kerry. "They also monitor the news to see if anything happens in the world that might affect the network."

Once a potential problem is detected, GNOC's chain-of-command springs into action, Kerry explained.

"Malicious network activity is reported to the global information assurance duty manager, who reports it to the watch officer, who then determines what actions should be taken," he said.

To become qualified as a watch officer, Sailors must go through a rigorous process to ensure they are of the highest caliber, said Kerry.

"It takes up to six months to become qualified," he said. "At the end of the process, we go through an oral board in which we are quizzed on how to respond to different scenarios."

On the GNOC watch floor, the watch officer is always assisted by three other Navy information system technicians, usually first

class petty officers.

"The decisions that we make affect the entire NMCI network and the network's security, so it is a challenge," said IT1(SW/AW) Taysha Colon, one of GNOC's watchstanders. "We have to make sure we make the right decisions, because if we don't, we can damage the network."


According to Colon, the high-tech, fast-paced life of a GNOC watchstander provides excellent training for work in the information-age economy.

"I like being in the world of fast-paced technology, and if I decide to get out of the Navy, I'll be able to apply what I've learned to the civilian world," she said.

According to Don General, technical director of GNOC, his command has been vital in supporting the goals of Naval Network Warfare Command, which is in charge of all Navy networks.

"We fall under the control of NETWARCOM Operations (N3)," said General. "Our goal is to support the Navy warfighter."

According to General, the vast growth of NMCI has demanded the implementation of tight oversight, which is what GNOC has provided ever since it was founded in 2002.

"Only the Internet is bigger than NMCI right now," he said. "GNOC has been largely successful in its goals. If we continue to get the right resources, we can do things even better. Congress may have outsourced out IT resources to EDS, but they did not absolve us of our responsibility to manage those assets." 

commercial certification tests as directed by DoD 8570.1M, whether working fulltime or part time as a member of the IA workforce.

All DoD IA/CND personnel, with privileged access or IA management tasks, are required to obtain one of several approved commercial certifications (shown in Figure #1) depending on the tasks they are performing.

The IAWWG Training Tiger Team is currently piloting several courses to determine the best commercial certification training and testing to blend with the military classroom curricula. Civilians have more choices in which IA training and certifications they can pursue. IA/CND personnel with privileged access must also take the operating system commercial certification that supports the information system they operate.

Since commercial certifications have not been a routine part of the IA/CND workforce training solution, new processes and procedures are being developed to support the mandated commercial credentialing. IA workforce members rely on the Navy Credentialing Program Office's new "Navy Credentialing Opportunities On-Line" web tool to provide additional IA credentialing information.

A process has been developed to buy commercial certification tests vouchers at the Enterprise level. While the first IA commercial certification testing will utilize a manual process, Naval Network Warfare Command and Headquarters Marine Corps expect that an automated paperless process will be in place by the end of the next fiscal year. The IAWWG is teaming with the Navy's Credentials Program Office and the Defense Activity for Non Traditional Training and Education to build an electronic paperless test voucher system so that the certifications are electronically tracked in military training jackets initially, and in civilian electronic training jackets as they become available. Bringing certification testing to DANTES facilities gets people credentialed more quickly and at less cost. As DoN IA professionals become credentialed, they will be highly desirable to joint operational leaders because they will be interchangeable in performing

the IA warfighting mission.

As the IA credentialing program gets kicked off, previously credentialed Sailors at the NMCI military detachments are piloting a Navy enterprise IA Training Management System (a similar system is currently in use by the aviation community) that will track certifications and Personnel Qualification System. If this tool meets the training and workforce management requirements, it will be recommended as a Sea Warrior enterprise tool set. The TMS will maintain the Sailor's blended training information to include commercial certifications and PQS. The Marine's IA training will be tracked in the Training and Education Command Integrated Management System.

Running concurrently, COMPACFLT and Fleet Force Command are implementing the "Fleet IA Workforce Improvement Initiative" to:


(1) Systematically deploy the mandated training and commercial certification testing in order to assess the impact and apply lessons learned for fleet implementation, and ...

(2) Develop and apply new metrics for IA/CND/Network operational performance. Once

training, testing, assessment, and credentialing processes are in place, the IA workforce will engage in full-scale implementation.

The Navy and Marine Corps DAAs are working with the Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education (MPT&E) command to develop a joint Navy Training Management and Planning System IA dashboard that will ultimately link individual manpower, personnel, and training systems to a single source for determining department-wide IA readiness. This system will monitor, track, and report on the total IA workforce; training and credentialing metrics will be visible to Information Assurance Managers at a moment's notice.

To find out more about the DoN IA Workforce Transformation Program and credentialing the IA Workforce, contact the Navy at (757) 417-6757 or the Marine Corps at (703) 693-3490.

For Navy "COOL" information: email crry_cqcredentials@navy.mil or phone (850) 452-6683, DSN: 922. 

... both the Navy and the Marine Corps are updating all IA professional classroom training curricula to meet these emerging IA requirements.
